

Washington, D.C -- In his first week in Congress, Rep. Arcuri voted for an extensive ethics package that will reform the excesses of past Congresses and restore trust in government. Both parties came together to address ethics reform during the first days of the 110th Congress.

“Americans should be able to trust that their government is working for them – not to line its own pockets. Last week, this Congress took a strong step to curb lobbyist influence and restore fiscal responsibility. These efforts will go a long way to restore the people’s trust in government and ensure ethical conduct in the People’s House. It is time to change the culture in Washington so working families come first,” said Arcuri. “We can’t run the people’s House any different than we run our own house.”

### The Ethics Reform Package:

- Bans Gifts from Lobbyists: Members of Congress and their staff will not accept gifts or meals from Lobbyists that might affect their opinions, create unethical relationships, or give the appearance of impropriety.
  
- Bans Lobbyist Travel: Lobbyists and the organizations that employ them are banned from planning, organizing, requesting, financing, arranging, or participating in travel for Members of Congress or their staff. The package also includes language prohibiting the use of official, personal, or campaign funds to pay for the use of non-commercial, corporate jets.
  
- Shuts Down Pay-to-Play Schemes: This provision ends schemes such as the “K St. Project” where by Members of Congress told lobbying firms whom they should hire in return for political access.

- Bans Arm Twisting for Votes: Holding votes open for undue amounts of time for the sole purpose of changing votes and affecting the outcome of a vote is prohibited.

- Requires Fiscal and Budgetary Responsibility: In response to the rising deficit, Congress voted on “pay-as-you-go” budget rules to stop any new deficit spending. These rules ensure that additional spending proposals are considered in light of spending cuts that would be needed to balance the budget.

- Earmark Reform: Due to the increase of earmarked special interest projects, Congress voted to ban secret deals in which lobbyists give gifts in return for special projects. This will ensure full disclosure of all earmarks, requiring Members to certify that earmarks would be for the public good and openly attributed to them.

This week Congress will pass elements of the Democrats’ “Six for ‘06” agenda that includes implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 commission, raising the minimum wage, cutting interest rates on student loans, and requiring Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices. Next week there will be votes on promoting stem cell research and repealing oil subsidies. Rep. Arcuri will be a cosponsor on each bill in the “Six for ‘06” agenda.

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